

Oct. 16, 1964

Anatol Mkrtchian

Name Anatol Mkrtchian

From Erevan State University Armenia

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dob 1931

Student Columbia University studying American labor unions.

Description: Age 33

height 5'7"

weight 160 lbs.

hair dark brown, receding at the sides, combed straight back.

description of face: Brown eyes, nose longer than normal, dark complexion, no scars, ears close to head,

appearance

Personal Characteristics Wears soviet made clothes, well tailored, dark blue suit, black shoes, purple socks, smokes soviet cigarettes, has soviet lighter,

Personal data: Married has two children, speaks Russian and Armenian, member of the communist party, went to school in Armenia, has status of an aspirant when he returns to the USSR will write his thesis and become a candidate.

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First contact. First contact was made on Thursday Oct. 15, 1964 during a reception held in the mens faculty lounge in Columbia University. The subject was present together with the other soviet students on exchange in Columbia University. I approached the subject when he was having a conversation with a Russian speaking person. (this Russian I saw before at a performance of the Leningrad Kirov Ballet) They were having a discussion about the role of the communist party in the government of the Soviet Union. When the topic came around to elections, I asked M. who elected Stalin. He said that that is a very difficult question to answer and that he would talk to me about that later. He then went on to explain to me that during the regime of Stalin everything was in the hands of one man. And that Stalin could have his way in anything he wanted. Then the Russian went away and I was left alone with M. I asked him how he liked Columbia University, and what were his impressions of New York. He said that Columbia was a very fine school, and that he enjoyed his stay. He said that N.Y. is quite dirty, but that he thinks it is very nice.

Topics. After the preliminary discussions we were approached by a Ukrainian man, Mr. Labunka I introduced them and it seems that M. knew Labunkas wife, from some of his classes. Labunka started a discussion with M. about the student exchange

Student exchange. L. asked M. how come there were 28 soviet students in America and only 24 American students in the USSR. M. said that the US government decided the figure and sent only 24 Americans to the USSR. L. said that this was not true, and said that the Soviet government was responsible. They argued this point for some time, each saying that he was qualified to discuss the issue. The argument was left unresolved. I asked M. if I could study in Kiev or Lviv as a exchange student M. said yes, L. said that there is no student in Kiev right now and that the last time there was a student in Kiev was in 1962. L. said that the government did not send students to Kiev because there is a shortage of housing in the city. M. did not reply to this. I asked M. how he got to be a exchange student, he said that there was a call for volunteers to study in the United States and he volunteered and was accepted.

Russian institute

M. wanted to know why the Russian institute was called the Russian institute and something else, he said that the Soviet Union is not Russia, and that it is wrong to confuse the two, he said that Russia is only one of the Republics of the USSR and that he as an Armenian is insulted by this fact. He said that the idea of Russia and the USSR being the same is a misconception hold in America, in the USSR nobody regards this as being the case. I said that if he is telling the

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truth I am very glad. L. said that he (M.) was wrong and that the misconception starts at home, L. cited Stalin for help in his speech thanking the Russian people for the part they played in winning the second world war. L. said that the Russian people set the tone in the USSR, and the other nationalities are just there in name only. M. said this is not true, he said that all the nationalities are equal, and that he understands the problems of the nationalities of the USSR very well and does not think that there exists a problem of Russian chauvinism in the country.

Russification L. said that his father works on a collective farm in the Ukraine. L. said that last year his father was run over by a tractor driven by a man who was a Russian. L. wanted to know what a Russian was doing driving a tractor in Western Ukraine. M. said that a man could work wherever he wanted to in the USSR. L. said that this not the reason that the man was working in the Western Ukraine. L. said that the man was resettled to the Ukraine to help Russify Western Ukraine. M. said that this was nonsense. I asked M. why there are Russian papers in the Ukraine, and if there are Ukrainian papers in Russia? M. said that there are. L. said that this was not true, M. said that L. is right. M. said that there is no need for Ukrainian books or newspapers in the Russian republic, because the Ukrainians in the RSFSR could order these papers from Kiev and have them sent over. L. asked if the Russians in the USSR could do this, order books from Moscow, and have them sent to the Ukraine. M. did not answer.

Ukrainian nationalism. M. asked L. when he came to the US. L. said in 1944 he left Ukraine. M. then said that L. left with the Germans, L. said that M. was accusing him of collaboration with the Germans. M. said that he did not mean that. L. asked him how old did he think he looked. M. could not guess. L. said that he left the Ukraine he was only 17 years old. M. said that many of the people who left were active collaborators of the Germans. L. said that he was too young to be a German supporter.

Political prisoners. One of the men standing next to us talking with another soviet student, said a joke about the Russians supporting Robert Kennedy. I said that I knew a joke about two prisoners in a slave camp. After I told the joke M. said that it wasn't true because it did not pertain to the facts of Soviet life today. He said that there are no political prisoners in the USSR today. L. said that this is not true. This started an arguement, M. said no and L. said yes. M. said that there was a general amnesty for political prisoners a few years ago and now there are no prisoners except spys, by spys he means people who receive money for spreading anti soviet propaganda. I stayed out of the arguement.

Conclusion. L. said that he had to go, and M. said that he was going with his friends (exchange students to the two guitars restaurant) L. said that he could contact his wife anytime in class and maybe they could meet again someday. I said that it was very interesting talking to him and maybe we could meet again someday. M. said yes, and left.

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